

Key Messages

Humboldt Herd Area Wild Horse Gather

June 2014

- The BLM Winnemucca District issued a Decision Record in full force and effect to begin a gather of approximately 100 excess wild horses in the Humboldt Herd Area (HA).
- Private lands and public safety issues as well as escalating drought conditions within the HA is adversely impacting the public rangelands and the wild horses.
 - Private landowners have written letters and participated in county meetings to make the BLM aware of wild horses destroying private fences, harassing domestic horses, and grazing on private lands.
 - There have been eight vehicle collisions with wild horses in this area that were documented resulting in the death of wild horses and damage to private vehicles.
 - There is no Appropriate Management Level (AML) for this HA since this area has not been designated to be managed for wild horses due to the checkerboard lands.
- Bait/water trapping will be the primary method used to capture the horses for this gather.
 - Although helicopter trapping can be effective in some herd areas under other circumstances, due to foaling season and costs it would not be practical as the primary gather method for this HA.
 - Because the Humboldt HA wild horses are not typically as skittish and wary of human activity as some other herds, bait/water trapping is a viable option.
- The Winnemucca District is performing its diligent duty to manage the public rangelands for multiple uses on this HA and associated livestock grazing allotments:
 - Grazing permittees have voluntarily taken non-use because of reduced forage and water and impacts of excess wild horses in and outside of the HA. The pasture being gathered in the HA is being rested from livestock grazing from October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014.
- The District has conducted and continues to implement a monitoring/compliance schedule of the HA to include:
 - Record wild horse numbers, foal numbers and locations;
 - An aerial census of the Humboldt HA was conducted on May 29, 2014
 - Monitor and record use patterns, trailing and forage utilization in relation to distance from water.
 - Drought monitoring

- The BLM is committed to the safety and humane treatment of animals throughout the gather operations.
 - Because the gather is starting during the typical foaling season, the BLM will take precautions during the gather to reduce heat stress.
 - The BLM will require the contractor to set up additional pens at the sorting/short-term holding corrals so that mares and foals will be kept together.
- The safety of the contractor, BLM staff and visitors are also a priority during the bait/water gather operations.
 - The public may view the gathered wild horses at the temporary holding facility if such facilities are located separate from the bait/water traps and will be provided a viewing area as close as possible.
- Maintaining the health of the public rangelands benefits wildlife species, ranching communities, and people who turn to the public lands to improve their quality of life through recreation and relaxation.
- Excess wild horses removed from the Humboldt HA will be transported to the Palomino Valley Center north of Sparks, Nevada where they will be prepared for adoption. The Center is open to the public five days a week plus the first Saturday of each month. Those not adopted would live out their lives on tall grass pastures in the Midwest.